



National Research Council Canada

Code of Conduct

Approved by NRC Senior Executive Committee on 10 April 2013

(Replaces Code of Conduct 1996)



National Research
Council Canada

Conseil national
de recherches Canada

Canada 

Introduction

As employees of the National Research Council of Canada (NRC), you are the custodians of a vital and proud national institution that has a unique mandate to serve Canada by conducting research and technology to help bridge Canada's innovation gap.

As members of the federal public sector, you also share a responsibility for protecting the integrity of Canada's public institutions.

To guide NRC employees in carrying out their duties, the *NRC Code of Conduct (2013)* sets out the values and expectations to bear in mind when conducting your professional duties.

- Chapter I — *Statement on NRC Values and Behaviours* — presents the values and expected behaviours that are uniquely important to NRC and that define the commitment that you, as NRC employees, make to your colleagues, clients and other stakeholders.
- Chapter II — *Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector (2012)* — presents the broader, foundational values for all federal public sector workers, including NRC employees, as required under the *Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act*.
- Chapter III — *Applying the NRC Code of Conduct* — discusses how to resolve ethical issues that might arise in the course of your daily work.
- Chapter IV — *Roles and Responsibilities* — outlines the duties and obligations of NRC managers and employees with respect to the NRC Code of Conduct.
- The Annex lists related documents in the context of specific NRC policies and federal legislated requirements.

Together, these chapters, known as the NRC Code of Conduct, constitute a condition of your employment at NRC.

NRC employees who do not comply with these behavioural standards may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with NRC procedures.

Chapter 1: Statement on NRC Values and Expected Behaviours

NRC recognizes that shared values aligned with business priorities underpin the success of outstanding organizations because they provide a common sense of direction, support decision making at all levels and guide the daily behaviours of employees.

The values and expected behaviours presented in this document were developed through consultations and an internal review process aimed at empowering NRC to pursue the mandate set out in the *NRC Act*, as well as the mission and vision that flow from it.

NRC's values and expected behaviours are intended to guide us in the performance of our duties and inform NRC decisions, actions, policies, processes and systems — thereby helping the organization be more successful in pursuing its goals. NRC will treat employees in accordance with these values and, as an overarching priority, create and maintain a safe and healthy workplace.

Each of the five NRC values has particular importance and unique relevance to your employment at NRC. They also seek to complement those of the broader public sector [See Chapter II].

Here are the five key NRC values and expected behaviours:

NRC Vision

To be the most effective research and technology organization in the world, stimulating sustainable domestic prosperity.

NRC Mission

Working with clients and partners, NRC provides strategic research, scientific and technical services to develop and deploy solutions to meet Canada's current and future industrial and societal needs.

Impact

As NRC employees, we make a positive difference for our stakeholders.

- We strive to generate sustainable benefits with long-lasting impact for Canadians.
- We align our work with:
 - Government of Canada priorities;
 - NRC's business objectives; and
 - Our clients' and stakeholders' needs.
- We are proud of the impact of our work and celebrate our successes.

Accountability

As NRC employees, we are responsible for our work and our workplace.

- We accept responsibility for our decisions and actions.
- We set realistic goals and clearly defined deliverables.
- We honour and meet our commitments.
- We reward performance. We steward resources responsibly.
- We all take responsibility for a safe and healthy work environment.
- We embrace diversity and hold ourselves responsible for creating an environment in which we all want to work.

Leadership

As NRC employees, we value leadership, initiative and the application of best practices in our work.

- We seek out and respond to the needs of our clients and stakeholders.
- We pursue leadership in our S&T and business practices.
- We benchmark our performance.
- We are innovative and encourage managed risk-taking.
- We pursue excellence.
- We encourage leadership at all levels.
- We promote continuous improvement.
- We seek growth and development opportunities.

Integrity

As NRC employees, we engage fairly and openly to earn credibility and trust.

- We are truthful and ethical.
- We respect confidentiality in dealings with colleagues, clients and partners.
- We declare and manage conflicts between our private interests and official duties.
- We promote shared understanding.
- We are consistent and fair in dealing with others.
- We engage in areas where we have demonstrated competence.
- We acknowledge and learn from our mistakes.

Collaboration

As NRC employees, we actively collaborate to engage vital knowledge and expertise and to generate better, more efficient solutions.

- We promote teamwork and information sharing to leverage our strengths.
- We actively seek partnerships for mutual benefit and commit to providing fair value.
- We value our relationships with external partners and acknowledge their role in our success.

Chapter II: Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector

The *Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act (PSDPA)* defines "public servants" as every person employed in the public sector (including the core public administration, Crown corporations and separate agencies such as NRC). The *Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector*, which came into effect in April 2012, is intended to clarify the role and expectations of NRC employees and other public servants within the framework of Canadian parliamentary democracy and the basic principle of responsible government.

The Role of Federal Public Servants

Federal public servants have a fundamental role to play in serving Canadians, their communities and the public interest under the direction of the elected government and in accordance with the law. As professionals whose work is essential to Canada's well-being and the enduring strength of Canadian democracy, public servants uphold the public trust.

The Constitution of Canada and the principles of responsible government provide the foundation for the role, responsibilities and values of the federal public sector. Constitutional conventions of ministerial responsibility prescribe the appropriate relationships among ministers, parliamentarians, public servants and the public. A professional and non-partisan federal public sector is integral to our democracy.

The Role of Ministers

Ministers are also responsible for preserving public trust and confidence in the integrity of public sector organizations and for upholding the tradition and practice of a professional non-partisan federal public sector. Furthermore, ministers play a critical role in supporting public servants' responsibility to provide professional and frank advice.

Objectives

The *Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector* outlines the values and expected behaviours that guide public servants in all activities related to their professional duties. By committing to these values and adhering to the expected behaviours, public servants strengthen the ethical culture of the public sector and contribute to public confidence in the integrity of all public institutions.

As established by the Treasury Board, the *Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector* fulfills the requirement of section 5 of the *Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act (PSDPA)*. It was developed in consultation with public servants, public sector organizations and bargaining agents. It should be read in conjunction with the *Statement on NRC Values and Behaviours* found in chapter I.

Statement of Values

These values are a compass to guide public servants in everything they do. They cannot be considered in isolation from each other as they will often overlap.

Federal public servants are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the following values of the public sector and the expected behaviours.

Respect for Democracy

The system of Canadian parliamentary democracy and its institutions are fundamental to serving the public interest. Public servants recognize that elected officials are accountable to Parliament, and ultimately to the Canadian people, and that a non-partisan public sector is essential to our democratic system.

Public servants shall uphold the Canadian parliamentary democracy and its institutions by:

- Respecting the rule of law and carrying out their duties in accordance with legislation, policies and directives in a non-partisan and impartial manner.
- Loyal carrying out the lawful decisions of their leaders and supporting ministers in their accountability to Parliament and Canadians.
- Providing decision makers with all the information, analysis and advice they need, always striving to be open, candid and impartial.

Respect for People

Treating all people with respect, dignity and fairness is fundamental to our relationship with the Canadian public and contributes to a safe and healthy work environment that promotes engagement, openness and transparency. The diversity of our people and the ideas they generate are the source of our innovation.

Public servants shall respect human dignity and the value of every person by:

- Treating every person with respect and fairness.
- Valuing diversity and the benefit of combining the unique qualities and strengths inherent in a diverse workforce.
- Helping to create and maintain safe and healthy workplaces that are free from harassment and discrimination.
- Working together in a spirit of openness, honesty and transparency that encourages engagement, collaboration and respectful communication.

Integrity

Integrity is the cornerstone of good governance and democracy. By upholding the highest ethical standards, public servants conserve and enhance public confidence in the honesty, fairness and impartiality of the federal public sector.

Public servants shall serve the public interest by:

- Acting at all times with integrity and in a manner that will bear the closest public scrutiny, an obligation that may not be fully satisfied by simply acting within the law.
- Never using their official roles to inappropriately obtain an advantage for themselves or to advantage or disadvantage others.
- Taking all possible steps to prevent and resolve any real, apparent or potential conflicts of interest between their official responsibilities and their private affairs in favour of the public interest.
- Acting in such a way as to maintain their employer's trust.

Stewardship

Federal public servants are entrusted to use and care for public resources responsibly, for both the short term and long term.

Public servants shall use resources responsibly by:

- Effectively and efficiently using the public money, property and resources managed by them.
- Considering the present and long-term effects that their actions have on people and the environment.
- Acquiring, preserving and sharing knowledge and information as appropriate.

Excellence

Excellence in the design and delivery of public sector policy, programs and services is beneficial to every aspect of Canadian public life. Engagement, collaboration, effective teamwork and professional development are all essential to a high-performing organization.

Public servants shall demonstrate professional excellence by:

- Providing fair, timely, efficient and effective services that respect Canada's official languages.
- Continually improving the quality of policies, programs and services they provide.
- Fostering a work environment that promotes teamwork, learning and innovation.

Chapter III: Applying the NRC Code of Conduct

NRC's history of research excellence and scientific distinction has earned us the respect and trust of the Canadian public, its clients, research organizations and researchers around the world.

Our shared values — and the corporate culture they create — are critically important in the workplace and in maintaining that respect and trust. Our values reflect how employees see themselves and the organization they work for. They also affect how clients and collaborators see us in return.

As a condition of your employment at NRC, you are required to abide by the NRC Code of Conduct by demonstrating the values and adhering to the expected behaviours outlined in chapters I and II. If you do not abide by these values and expectations, you may be subject to administrative or disciplinary measures up to and including termination of employment.

Avenues for Resolution

The expected behaviours are not intended to respond to every possible ethical issue that might arise in the course of your daily work. When ethical issues arise, you are encouraged to discuss and resolve these matters with your immediate supervisor. You can also seek advice and support from other appropriate sources within and outside NRC.

NRC employees at all levels are expected to resolve issues in a fair and respectful manner and consider informal processes such as dialogue or mediation.

As provided by the NRC Procedures under the *Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act* (PSDPA), if you have information that could suggest a serious breach of the NRC Code of Conduct, you can bring this matter to the attention of your immediate supervisor, the NRC Secretary General or the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner. Members of the public can bring such matters to the NRC Secretary General's Office or to the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner.

NRC employees who have concerns with Code-related decisions that directly affect them are encouraged to discuss their concerns with their supervisor. If any issues remain following such discussions, employees can avail themselves of existing NRC redress mechanisms, depending on the nature of the issue.

Chapter IV: Roles and Responsibilities

The President of NRC

As Chief Executive of NRC, the President has specific responsibilities under the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act (PSDPA), including the duty to establish the NRC Code of Conduct, as well as the overall responsibility for fostering a positive culture of values and ethics at NRC.

To this end, the President of NRC ensures that measures are in place to inform employees of their obligations under the NRC Code of Conduct that employees can obtain appropriate advice within NRC on ethical issues, and that internal disclosure procedures are implemented effectively at NRC.

NRC Secretary General

As the Senior Officer for disclosure under the PSDPA, the NRC Secretary General is responsible for supporting the President of NRC in meeting the requirements of the Act. This responsibility includes addressing disclosures of wrongdoing. These duties and authorities are described in the [NRC - Procedures for Disclosures Pursuant to the PSDPA](#).

The NRC Secretary General will monitor the implementation of the NRC Code of Conduct and, in consultation with the Vice-President (Human Resources), recommend modifications to the President as appropriate.

Vice-President - NRC Human Resources Branch

The Vice-President, Human Resources Branch will support the President by exemplifying the NRC Code of Conduct, raising awareness throughout NRC of the content of the NRC Code and providing assistance for its implementation, as well as collaborating with the NRC Secretary General in advising the President of any needed modifications based on evaluations or changes in relevant legislation.

NRC Vice-Presidents and Managers

Vice-Presidents and managers are responsible for exemplifying the NRC Code of Conduct and for ensuring that the Code is implemented with consistency throughout the NRC employee population for which they are responsible.

NRC Employees

As NRC employees, you are responsible for knowing, demonstrating and complying with the NRC Code of Conduct, including all other policies and instruments duly approved and presented as annexes to it.

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat
Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer

In support of the Treasury Board President's responsibilities under section 4 of the PSDPA, the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO) is responsible for promoting ethical practices in the public sector. NRC will work with the OCHRO to implement and promote the Code.

The President and the Secretary General will seek advice from the OCHRO as required, with respect to the Code's interpretation. The Chief Human Resources Officer may issue directives, standards and guidelines related to the *Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector*. OCHRO will monitor the implementation of the *Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector* at NRC with a view to assessing whether the stated objectives have been achieved.

If you have any other questions about the NRC Code of Conduct, contact the NRC Secretary General's Office.

ANNEX

LINKAGES

The following documents relate to federal legislation and other relevant requirements. NRC expects you to become familiar with them and to consult your supervisor and/or the NRC subject matter expert for clarification if you have any questions or uncertainty.

- [Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act](#)
- [NRC Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- [Respectful Workplace and Prevention of Harassment Policy and Guidelines](#) (HR Manual, Chapter 10, Section 10.2)
- [Research Integrity](#) (HR Manual, Chapter 11, Section 11.8)
- [Discipline Procedures](#) (HR Manual, Chapter 5, Section 5.6)
- [Employee Web 2.0/Social Media Directives](#)